

B-3934

MHT EASEMENT WITHIN THE OTTERBEIN BALTIMORE CITY HISTORIC DISTRICT

1. 516 South Hanover Street, Baltimore City

Magi No.

DOE ☒ yes ☐ no

# Maryland Historical Trust

## State Historic Sites Inventory Form

### 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic

and/or common Otterbein Historic District

### 2. Location

street & number Barre, Lee, Hill, Sharp, & Hanover Streets ☐ not for publicationcity, town Baltimore ☐ vicinity of ☐ congressional districtstate Maryland ☐ county N/A

### 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

### 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Multiple Private

street & number ☐ telephone no.:city, town ☐ state and zip code

### 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore City Courthouse ☐ liberstreet & number ☐ foliocity, town Baltimore ☐ state Maryland

### 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation

date 1983 ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☒ local

pository for survey records CHAP

city, town Baltimore ☐ state Maryland

## 7. Description

Survey No. B-3934

### Condition

☐ excellent  
☒ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☐ unaltered  
☐ altered

### Check one

☐ original site  
☐ moved      date of move \_\_\_\_\_

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

### Summary Description

117 contributing resources

Located directly west of the Inner Harbor, the Otterbein area includes approximately three city blocks primarily of renovated rowhousing and compatible new infill housing. The rehabilitation of the area has been complimented with brick sidewalks, period street lights and small, public open-space areas. The houses range from early gabled roof houses to Victorian-era three story high houses with ornate cornices. The houses of Otterbein are built in the traditional Baltimore rowhouse style with flat brick facades and decoration used only to highlight doors, windows and the roofline. Many of the buildings display noteworthy architectural details, such as original cornices, period light fixtures, bracketed storefronts and traditional marble steps. Most of the new infill housing in the area relates to the older housing in materials, scale, changing rooflines and diversification within groupings, if not in style. A few of the new residential buildings are direct attempts at reproducing early rowhouse designs with varying degrees of success. Besides the housing, there are two extant church structures in the area. These churches and the remaining storefront buildings represent the early diversity of land use in the Otterbein area, although all but one church has been converted into housing.

### General Description

The Otterbein area is made up of approximately 100 early to late 19th century rowhouses and six infill groups of compatible new housing. The houses are located on a strict grid, urban street pattern. The overall appearance of the area is dominated by exposed brick flat facades, a diversity of roof line configurations, excellent architectural detailing, brick sidewalks and period light fixtures (1).

The earliest houses in the neighborhood have gabled roofs and dormers, flat brick facades, six over six windows and little ornamentation (2). Some are more elaborate, such as 118 West Lee Street, which features arched windows and a three bay wide facade (3).

The houses at the northwest corner of Hanover and Lee Streets are extremely large for this early housing type in the Otterbein area. They are 3 ½ stories high (4).

## 8. Significance

Survey No. B-3934

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

### Specific dates

### Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D  
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☐ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

### Statement of Significance

Otterbein is one of the few surviving residential neighborhoods located near the original founding of Baltimore City. It is one of Baltimore's best preserved neighborhoods featuring architecture primarily from the early to mid-nineteenth century. The buildings are excellent examples of Baltimore's earliest housing types, and they retain many distinctive characteristics of nineteenth century houses, such as Flemish bond brickwork, original cornices and original storefronts. The style and character of extant buildings is reflective of the diversity of the neighborhood which has played an important role in local history. With its location near the waterfront, the **early residents** of Otterbein were directly involved with the port-related activities that influenced Baltimore's growth and development. They included both wealthy merchants and industrialists, as well as laborers in maritime trade and mechanics. This was a racially and economically integrated area, as were most nineteenth century Baltimore neighborhoods with upper and middle class whites living on the main streets, and blacks and poor whites living in small alley housing. Otterbein was not only a residential neighborhood but typifies communities of the period with a variety of uses including churches, a school and businesses. Today, Otterbein is best known as one of America's most successful attempts at urban homesteading. With its renovated older housing, compatible new infill housing and location near the Inner Harbor, Otterbein has become one of Baltimore's most desired residential neighborhoods.



## CONTINUATION SHEET

## 7.1 DESCRIPTION(continued)

Much of the remaining antebellum housing in the area are three stories high with shallow gabled roofs and small 3rd story windows (5). They represent an enlargement of the earlier gabled roof structure. A few are decorated with arched windows and lintels with **bull's eye** corner blocks, such as the house at 608 S. Hanover Street (6).

Later nineteenth century domestic architecture is represented by full three story houses with flat roofs and decorative cornices. They retain the flat facades of earlier housing types, but are much larger (7). Six over six windows are replaced with larger and less lights.

The houses in the area retain many excellent details such as restored double doors, marble steps, iron railings, shutters, and decorative door surrounds (8, 9 and 10). A few of the buildings feature original storefronts (11).

Within this environment of early houses are infill groupings that retain the historic character of the area. Some are reproduction of earlier styles, such as the gabled roof house with three dormer windows at the south east corner of Sharp Street and Hill Street (12). The two house group with a shared entrance at 121-23 Lee Street is a new house with early architectural appointments(13).

The grouping on the north side of Hill Street at Sharp Street is clearly modern, yet it retains the brick facade, changing roof line, gables and rhythm of the nineteenth century Otterbein streetscape (14). The new groupings along Hanover Street are also modern, but retain the flavor of the neighborhood (15).

The city has provided brick sidewalks, landscaping, period street lights and other amenities to create enjoyable public spaces in the residential community (16). These streetscape improvements also distinguishes Otterbein from other neighborhoods near the Inner Harbor.

Two church structures are also extant in the area. An elaborate Victorian church with large stained glass windows, pediments and towers is located at 717 Sharp Street (17). A smaller church with an ornate door surround and corbelled brick work is located at 116 West Hill Street (18). This building has been converted into condominiums.



## CONTINUATION SHEET

## 8.1 SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

## History and Support

The Otterbein neighborhood is one of the oldest in Baltimore. The name originates from the Otterbein church, built in the area in 1785. Its first pastor was Reverend Philip Wilhelm Otterbein, supplying the name of the church and the neighborhood. The area was part of a land parcel called "John Eager Howard's Latest Addition to Baltimore Town". As early as 1789 Howard was selling and subleasing lots. Recorded in grantee records from City land records are subleases to Jacob Young, a shoemaker, and William Foltz, a cordwainer.

After Howard's death in 1827, his estate was broken up between his sons and grandsons, including Benjamin C. Howard and James Howard McHenry. They completed the subleasing of land in the area.

The 1801 Warner and Hanna Map shows the area laid out but lists it as unbuilt, near the southwestern border of the city. Its location adjacent to the Light and Pratt Street wharves, a busy area in the early 19th century, was ideal for the large brick homes of merchants who could live close to their places of business. Also living close to the wharves, up side streets such as Honey Alley (later Hughes) were the trades people and "mechanics". The city was segregated by occupation rather than economy or race at this time. Whites and freed blacks inhabited the community.

In the mid-nineteenth century the city passenger railway went down Sharp Street past the front of the John Wesley Chapel and an area called Hermitage Square since 1846 in front of the church. The railroad continued down Montgomery to Light Street.

The southern district police station was located just south of Hughes Street at Sharp Street. In the book Our Police, Otterbein of 1888 is described as an area of "factories, packing houses and public buildings, densely populated" and "mostly black". It suffered greatly in the small pox epidemic of 1882.

The Bromely Atlas of 1906 shows the police station at Sharp and Montgomery Streets became a Salvation Army Industrial Home. There were many churches in the general area, including the Lee Street Baptist Church and St. Michaels Roman Catholic Church on the north side of Hill Street. Two schools were in the immediate neighborhood, one "public" and one "colored". Industry was to the south and west and farther north around the wharves, including the Joseph Thomas and Son Planing Mill, James Robertson Leadworks, and the American Biscuit Company.

## CONTINUATION SHEET

## 8.2 SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

Otterbein remained an area which was primarily black and low income through most of the twentieth century. As the Inner Harbor area declined and industries left, the neighborhood also became deteriorated. Originally the area was slated for demolition under urban renewal plans to be replaced by new housing designed by Kenzo Tange of Japan, but with the success of Stirling Street and the homesteading program, the buildings were saved from the wrecker's ball. Otterbein is now one of Baltimore's best preserved neighborhoods, within a short walk of the city's revitalized Inner Harbor.

## Boundary Justification

The Otterbein area takes in the entire homesteading project under which houses were rehabilitated under certain preservation guidelines and the City provided certain amenities specifically for this area such as brick sidewalks and period light fixtures. New housing has been constructed north of West Barre Street and east of South Hanover Street. Directly south of Hughes Street is the National Register Little Montgomery Street Historic District.

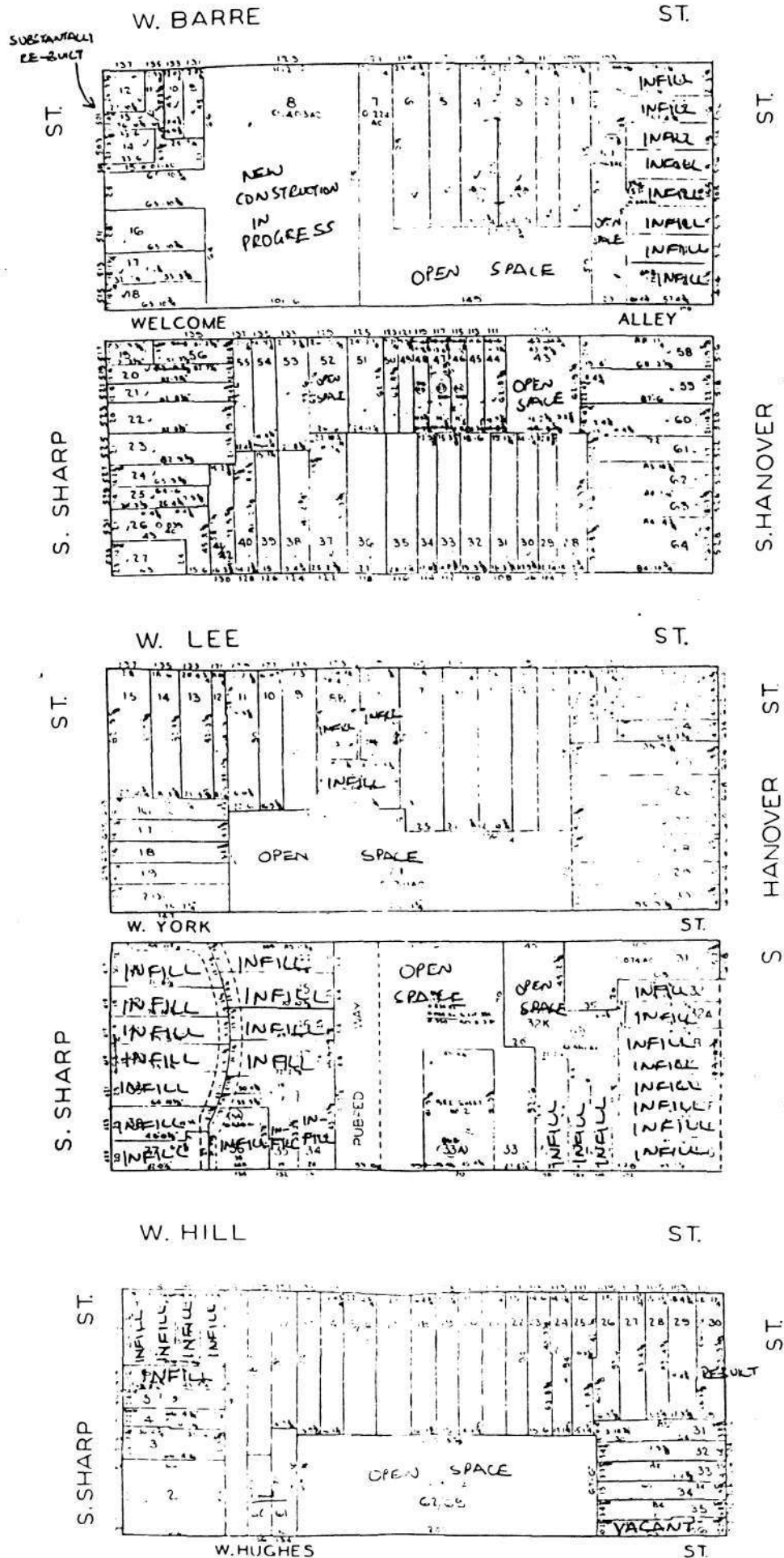
## Non-Contributing Buildings

The only non-contributing buildings in the district are the recent infill housing. Although they are compatible to the character of the older structures, these structures should not qualify for the historic preservation tax incentives because of their recent dates of construction. Approximately 17% of the district is made up of these infill buildings.



OTTERBEIN HISTORIC DISTRICT (local district)  
Baltimore, Maryland

B-3934



B-3934  
 Otterbein Historic District  
 Bounded by Barre, Lee, Hill, Shap & Hanover Streets  
 Block N/A Lot N/A  
 Baltimore City  
 Baltimore East Quad.

